



INDIANA
REPERTORY
THEATRE

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

a play by **Simon Stephens**
based on the novel by **Mark Haddon**

September 19 –
October 14, 2017

on the IRT's
OneAmerica
Mainstage



STUDY GUIDE

edited by Richard J Roberts

with contributions by
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The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

a play by Simon Stephens • based on the novel by Mark Haddon

In this captivating mystery, filled with intrigue, adventure, and intense drama, Christopher Boone, a young man with many signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder, must follow the clues he finds to unlock the mysteries of a grisly crime and of his family's past. While overcoming the obstacles in his own mind and the adults who don't understand him, Christopher seeks to learn what's really true about the world around him. This Tony Award-winning adaptation of Mark Haddon's critically acclaimed novel challenges us to see the world through a new pair of eyes and come to terms with the sometimes difficult task of creating a loving family.

STUDENT MATINEES 10:00 AM on September 26, 27, 29, & October 3, 4, 11*

ESTIMATED LENGTH Approximately 2 hours, 35 minutes

SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE

* IRT will host a sensory friendly student matinee performance of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* on October 11 at 10:00 AM. This performance will include a variety of accommodations designed to help patrons with sensory sensitivities experience an IRT performance. For details, contact Randy D. Pease using the information below.

CONTENT ADVISORY

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time is a dramatic mystery that contains strong language throughout, and adult themes and situations. Script preview available upon request.

AGE RANGE Recommended for grades 9-12

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SYNOPSIS:

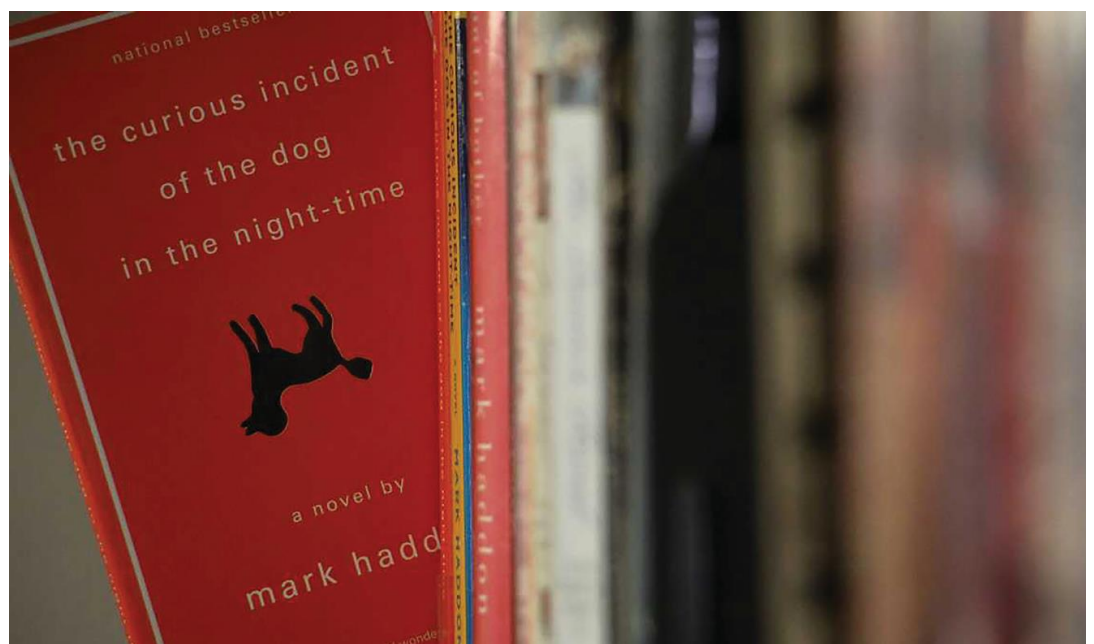
INSIDE *THE CURIOUS INCIDENT*

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time focuses on Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old with many signs of autism spectrum disorder. Christopher lives with his father in Swindon, Great Britain, about 75 miles west of London. One night, Christopher discovers that his next door neighbor's dog, Wellington, has been killed with a pitchfork. Upset by this incident, Christopher, who doesn't like to be touched, strikes a police officer who tries to pull him away from the dog. Christopher is arrested and questioned about Wellington's death, but eventually released into his father's custody. Although his father tells him to keep his nose out of other people's business, Christopher decides to find out who killed Wellington.

Christopher's teacher, Siobhan (*pronounced sho-VAHN*), suggests to Christopher that he write a story about what happened to Wellington. That story, supposedly written by Christopher, is the text of the original novel by Mark Haddon. In the play by Simon Stephens, Siobhan reads Christopher's book aloud at times, while in other scenes Christopher speaks to us directly. Some moments are narrated, but most are enacted by the cast, many of whom play several different roles. We see Christopher's father telling him about his mother's death, and we learn about the daily life of father and son in the two years since. We hear about the special school Christopher attends, and about his plans to be the first from his school to take A-levels (college entrance exams). Through Christopher's writing, we are able to get inside his mind, sharing his unique view of the world around him.

The story of the play is told not only through words, but also through choreographed movement by the ensemble of ten actors. Those playing multiple roles often do so with the simple change of a single costume accessory. Likewise, the stage setting is very spare, allowing the text and the actors' movement to help us imagine a wide variety of different locations with simple, minimal scenic adjustments, along with extensive lighting, music, sound, and video projections.

Although Christopher is very uncomfortable with strangers, he begins his investigation of Wellington's death by going door to door, questioning neighbors to whom he has never spoken before. Eventually his questions lead him to a world of people he has never met and places he has never been.



LOOKING BEYOND

BY JANET ALLEN,
EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

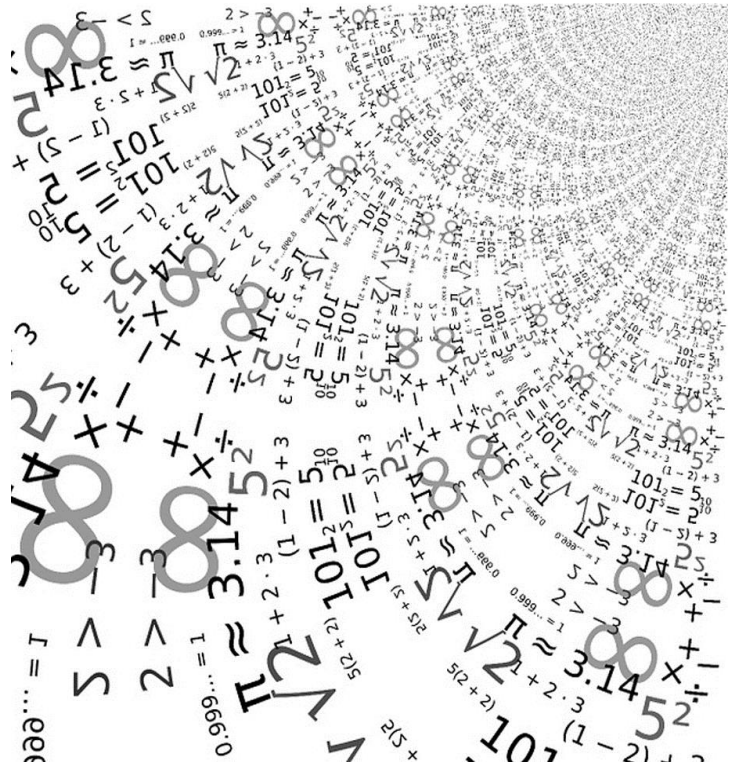
Welcome to IRT's 46th season! Our curatorial goal is to surprise you, excite you, provoke you, and yes, entertain you, through a mix of plays that we've selected for their variety of impacts. Sometimes that desired impact is to send you back into your lives with burning questions and conversations; sometimes it's to expand your perspective; sometimes it's to make you breathless with the power of human possibility.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time does a bit of all these. On the surface it's a thriller about an odd neighborhood tragedy. It's clearly about a child, but it's also about adults. As it unfolds, we find, like in many well-crafted stories, that there are many other surprising things at stake that take us into the heart of primal human relationships. Most important of these is the relationship between parents and their child, but also important are the relationship between neighbors, the relationship between children and their teachers, the relationship between the community of care and those for whom care is needed.

Mark Haddon crafted this story first into an award-winning novel—his first novel for adults, but also read widely by children—which was then faithfully adapted to the stage. The story is told in the first person, so the nature of that central character is revealed slowly by what he says and does, not by what he is called or how he is characterized by others. This is a particularly winning storytelling device that immediately draws us to that central character. We root for him from the first second of the play, and we are inextricably swept along in his journey. And his journey is a profound one: starting in his neighborhood, it expands out in time and space, but also inwardly, as he takes risks and finds courage, experiences fear and longing, and finally, realizes a sense of accomplishment.

In the book, Christopher, our self-narrator, is unusual and straightforward. Haddon offers us no explanations or names for his circumstances. We quickly begin to name them for ourselves—autism, Asperger's—because these are terms that we now accept to explain certain kinds of human behaviors. But the play asks us not to explain, not to diagnose, but to experience. What does it feel like to be Christopher? What does it feel like to be his father or mother? How do we judge/overlook/marginalize people who are different?

The beauty of a theatre experience like this is that it is so utterly life-affirming—and what could possibly be a better way to open a season? Welcome, and enjoy.

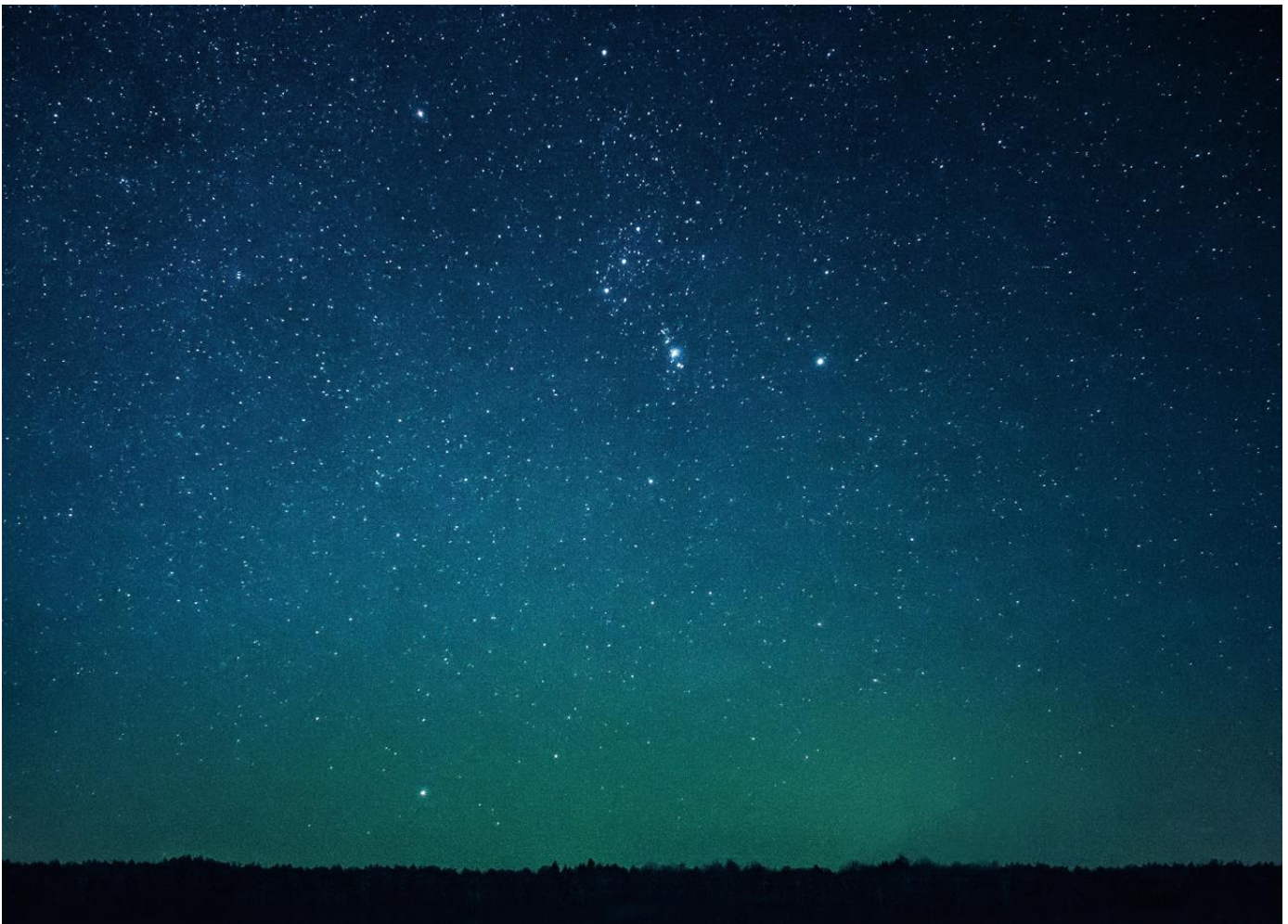


TRUTH & COMPASSION

BY RISA BRAININ, DIRECTOR

When I first read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, I was blown away by the beauty of the language. Like the book, the stage adaptation is a gorgeous piece of writing: simple and yet poetic. The 15-year-old Christopher Boone tells his own story with the help of his life-changing teacher, Siobhan, and a diverse group of lively and colorful characters. I am particularly drawn to that kind of theatricality, where an ensemble creates the world around the main character, and leads us through his experience. I can tell you that creating the design for this show with our wonderful team, and finding a great company of actors who can pull this off, was pure joy.

Christopher is a truth teller, and his way of seeing the world is unique. In these polarized times when the very concept of “truth” is under fire, I find Christopher’s candor very refreshing. His reactions are unencumbered by politics, prejudices, or preconceptions—he just tells it like it is. His frank honesty encourages every person he meets to reexamine his or her motives, thoughts, and actions. This clash of ideas immediately exposes how very fragile he is (and all of us are), while gently reminding us to practice compassion above all else. It is a play for our times. We all love this piece and can’t wait to share it with the audiences at IRT.



DESIGNER NOTES:**FLUIDITY OF TIME & SPACE****RUSSELL METHENY** SCENIC DESIGNER

The set for *The Curious Incident* is designed as a space for light and moving images to play, shift, and change the physical and emotional atmosphere of the space, and to enhance the actors' characters, dialogue, and actions. The playwriting is incredibly fluid, with many layered locations and time changes, and the dialogue is verbally visual. Director Risa Brainin and the design team storyboarded the entire play with the scenic model to help define the essential scenic, light, sound, and costume elements, and the flow of these elements with the actors. Although the set feels essentially spare, there are elements of real detail for certain scenes that will appear to enhance the emotional connection between the ensemble cast and the audience.



Preliminary model by scenic designer Russell Metheny.

MICHAEL KLAERS LIGHTING DESIGNER

We're very used to thinking about light as an environment that characters live in and move through. Light can help tell the story of where and when we are in a play, and what the world thinks about the characters. As we've been working on this play, I've been thinking about light as a sensory experience by itself. Even before it illuminates the space around us, we all experience light as a raw sensory perception. We often ignore, sometimes just tolerate, and only occasionally enjoy the colors and flickers and textures of light itself before it begins to do its job of revealing or obscuring.



Costume sketches for (above) Siobhan, Mr. Thomson, Mrs. Alexander, Man at Counter, Mrs. Shears, (below) Neighbor at No. 40, Ed, Christopher, Judy, & Station Policeman, by designer Devon Painter.



DEVON PAINTER COSTUME DESIGNER

The challenge of this show is to create the individuals that Christopher encounters with small gestures to delineate each character. Each member of the ensemble plays a significant role in Christopher's story, as well as a myriad of supporting roles, all of which need quick representation to define him or her. I chose a neutral palette for the ensemble—almost “a world a teachers” from which individual characters could then appear when needed.

MICKEY ROWE

ACTING & AUTISM

MICKEY ROWE IS THE FIRST AMERICAN ACTOR WITH AUTISM TO PLAY THE CENTRAL ROLE OF CHRISTOPHER, AN AUTISTIC, IN *THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME*. HERE HE SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON THIS MILESTONE.



I am so honored to get to play Christopher Francis Boone and represent the autistic community at the incredible and beautiful Indiana Repertory Theatre and Syracuse Stage, directed by Risa Brainin. You may ask yourself, what is an autistic doing working at a traditional theatre company? I often ask myself that question. But I believe that in theatre, my “weakness” is one of my strengths.

If you see me walking down the street, I most likely have headphones on. I nearly always wear a blue T-shirt—V-neck so nothing touches my neck. And I don’t wear coats or jackets when it’s cold out, which drives my wife crazy. I was late to speak, but I invented my own incredibly detailed sign language to communicate. I had speech therapy all through elementary school and occupational therapy all through middle school.

I am also legally blind—autism is often linked with vision or hearing problems—so I can’t perform very well in cold readings. If given a few days before an audition, I always memorize sides so I don’t read them off the page. I enlarge scripts so they are twice as big, just like all of my textbooks and tests were enlarged in school. I will often secretly record the first read-through of a play on my cell phone, hidden in my pocket, so that I can learn my lines and study the script by listening; my eyes give out after about 15 minutes of looking at a page. But because I know this, I get off book damn fast—often before the first rehearsal.

Autistics use scripts every day. We use scripting for daily situations that we can predict the outcome of, and stick to those scripts. My goal as an autistic is to make you believe that I am coming up with words on the spot, that this is spontaneous, the first time the conversation has ever happened in my life; this is also my job on stage as an actor.

For instance, at a coffee shop:

ME: Hi, how are you doing today? (*Smile.*) Can I please have a small coffee?

Thank you so much! (*If it seems like more conversation is needed*) Has it been busy today?

BARISTA: (*Any barista response.*)

ME: Oh yeah? Is it nicer when it's busy or when it's slow? Have a great rest of your day!

Always stick to the script. It makes things infinitely easier.

Or playing Edmond in *King Lear*:

... Wherefore should I

Stand in the plague of custom, and permit

The curiosity of nations to deprive me?

For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines

Lag of a brother? ...

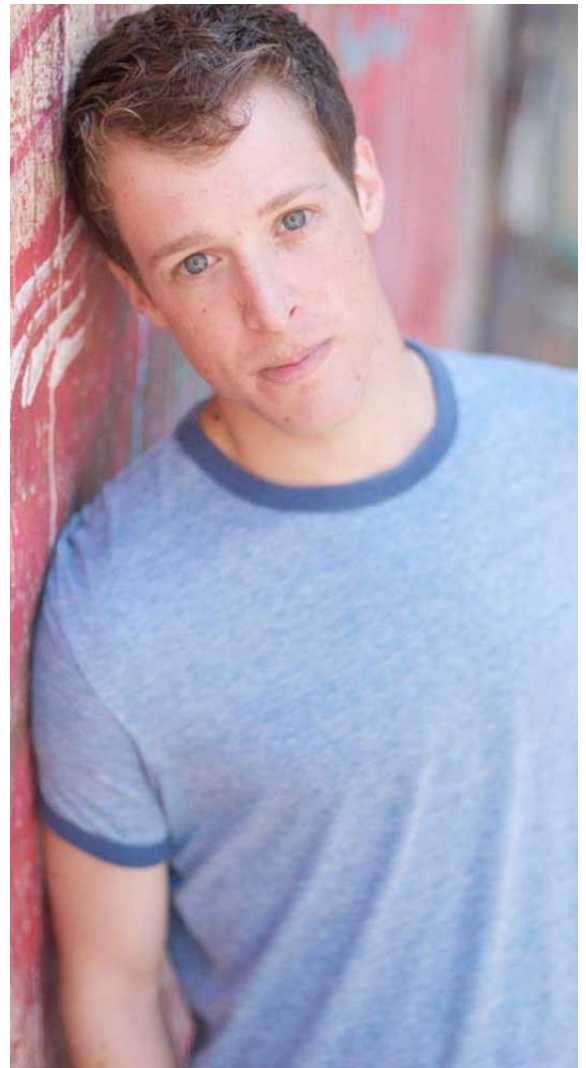
It's really no different. They're lines I've learned, that I say often, but I'm making you believe they are mine, particular to this specific moment.

These all may seem like reasons why I should never be an actor. But acting is a dichotomy. A tension between what is safe and what is dangerous. What is known and what is unknown. What's mundane and what's exciting.

There is a tension between everything that I am and everything that might be conventional for an actor. This is the same tension that makes incredible theatre. No one wants to see something if it is too comfortable. Every performance should have a tension between what feels easy and what feels risky. When a grand piano is gracefully lowered out of a window by a rope onto a flatbed truck, slowly spinning and dangling, the tension in the rope is what everyone is watching. In theatre, the performer is the rope, making the incredible look graceful and easy, making the audience complicit in every thought, every tactical switch. When the rope goes slack, the show is over.

I put my dichotomies to work for me. It's about doing the work and being in control so the audience trusts you to lead them, and then being vulnerable and letting the audience see your soul. The skill, study, and training help create the trust. The challenges make the vulnerability. You need both of them. As an autistic, I have felt vulnerable my entire life; to be vulnerable on stage is no biggie.

With autism comes a new way of thinking; a fresh eye, a fresh mind. Literally, a completely different wiring of the brain.



A lot of people ask me about how physical the show is. I personally love physical stimulus—especially in the way of choreography and circus skills. About half of autistics really have a hard time with physical stimulus, and the other half crave it and go out of their way to find it. I love it. So *Curious Incident* won't be a problem for me. I'm really excited to work with the show's movement coordinator Mariel Greenlee; it's one of the parts of the show that I'm most looking forward to. (And no, we will not have to change anything about the show to accommodate any special needs—except for enlarging the script to 18 pt. font.)

Being in front of an audience of 600 or 2,890 people is very easy for me. The roles are incredibly clear, logical, and laid out. I am on stage; you are sitting in the seats watching me. I am playing a character, and that is what you expect, want, and are paying for. The conversations on stage are scripted, and written much better than the ones in my real life. On the street is where conversations are scary—those roles aren't clear.

Sure, there are lots of things working against me at any given time. According to the Centers for Disease Control, one in seven American children have a developmental disability, and people with disabilities make up the largest minority in the United States. According to the 2010 census, 20 percent of the adult U.S. population has a disability.

Yet according to a recent Ruderman Family Foundation Report, less than 1 percent of TV characters have a disability. Even worse, 95 percent of disabled characters are played by able-bodied actors. That rate is even lower when it comes to developmental disabilities like autism. This means all too often that when we learn about autism on TV, in the movies, or on stage, we are learning about autism from others, instead of going straight to the source and learning from autistic adults.

But that is why it is even more important that young actors with disabilities see role models who will tell them that “If you are different, if you access the world differently, if you need special accommodations, then theatre needs you! The world needs you!”

I am so looking forward to getting the chance to show young disabled people that they can represent themselves honestly on stage and tell their own stories.

Special thanks to Playbill.com for permission to reprint this article.

black & white photos by Mario Lemafa



AUTHOR MARK HADDON



Mark Haddon is a British author of novels, children's literature, poetry, screenplays, and radio drama. He is known for his series of *Agent Z* books, one of which, *Agent Z and the Penguin from Mars*, was made into a Children's BBC sitcom. He wrote the screenplay for the BBC television adaptation of Raymond Briggs's story *Fungus the Bogeyman*, and the BBC television drama *Coming Down the Mountain*. In 2003, Haddon published *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. The first book that he wrote intentionally for an adult audience, it was successfully marketed to both adult and child audiences. Likewise, it won the Whitbread Book of the Year Award and the Commonwealth Writers Prize in adult categories, as well as the *Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize. His second adult novel, *A Spot of Bother*, was published in 2006.

PLAYWRIGHT SIMON STEPHENS

English playwright Simon Stephens is an artistic associate at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, London, and the associate playwright of Steep Theatre Company in Chicago, where two of his plays, *Harper Regan* and *Motortown*, had their U.S. premieres. His other plays include *Port* (Pearson Award), *One Minute* (Tron Theatre Award), *On the Shore of the Wide World* (Olivier Award), *Pornography* (Scotland Critics' Award), and *Punk Rock* (nominated for the TMA Award and the *Evening Standard* Award). *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* won the 2013 Olivier Award and the 2015 Tony Award for Best Play. More recently, his play *Heisenberg* premiered Off-Broadway, and his adaptation of Brecht and Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* premiered at the National Theatre in London.



MATHS

The character of Christopher is highly skilled at maths, which is the abbreviated term that the British use as Americans use the term math.

cardinal numbers

A number denoting a quantity (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.), as opposed to ordinal numbers (first, second, third, fourth, fifth, etc.).

cubes

1; 8; 27; 64; 125 ... 1,331

Cubes of cardinal numbers are found by taking a number and putting it to the third power:

$$\begin{array}{lll} 1^3 = 1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1 & 3^3 = 3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27 & 5^3 = 5 \times 5 \times 5 = 125 \\ 2^3 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8 & 4^3 = 4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64 & 6^3 = 6 \times 6 \times 6 = 216 \quad \text{etc.} \end{array}$$

logarithmic formula for the approximate number of prime numbers not greater than x

The logarithm of a number is the exponent to which another fixed number must be raised to produce that number. For example: the base 10 logarithm of 1000 is 3; 10 to the power 3 is 1000 ($1000 = 10 \times 10 \times 10 = 10^3$); 10 is used as a factor three times.

powers of 2

A number in the form of 2^n with n being an integer that is not negative:

$$\begin{array}{lll} 2^1 = 2 & 2^3 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8 & 2^5 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32 \\ 2^2 = 2 \times 2 = 4 & 2^4 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16 & 2^6 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 64 \quad \text{etc.} \end{array}$$

prime number

A number that can only be divided by 1 and itself: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, etc. Author Mark Haddon numbered the chapters in his book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* with prime numbers only.

Pythagoras' theorem

Pythagoras (c. 570-495 BCE), a philosopher and mathematician of Ancient Greece, is revered as a great mathematician and scientist. His famous Pythagorean theorem states that in a right triangle (a triangle with a 90 degree angle), when c is the longest side of the triangle (the hypotenuse), and a and b are the other two sides, of the triangle, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

Pythagoras as portrayed by Raphael in his fresco The School of Athens (1511).



SCIENCES

The character of Christopher intends to become an astronaut.

black hole

A section of space where the gravitational field is so intense that no matter or radiation—including light—can escape.

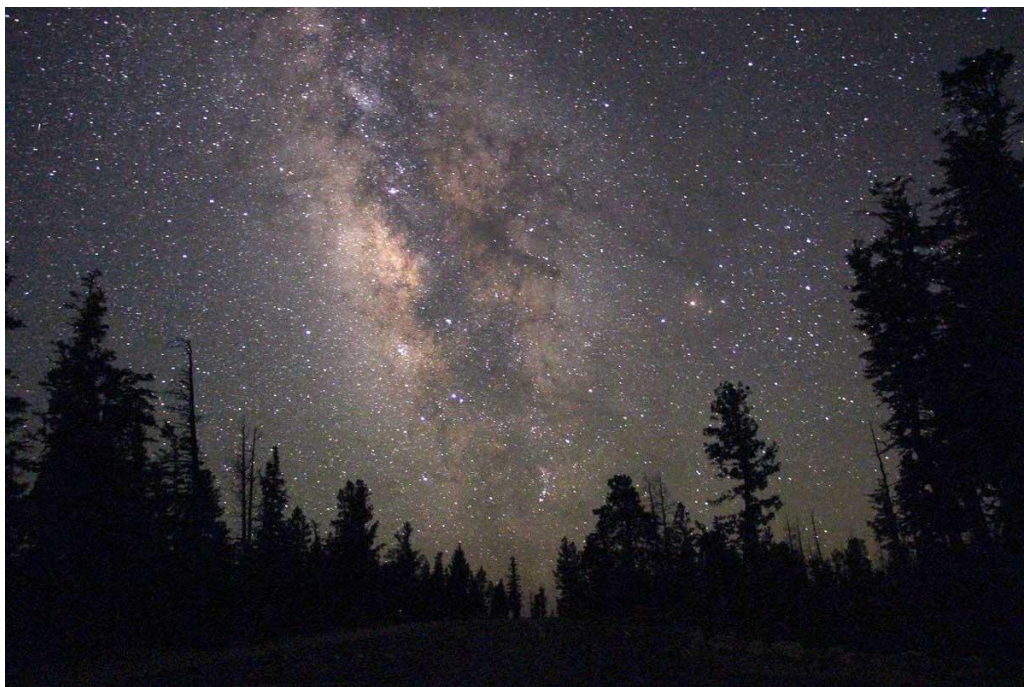
electromagnetic waves

Electromagnetic radiation refers to the waves of the electromagnetic field radiating through space carrying electromagnetic energy, including radio waves, microwaves, infrared (visible) light, ultraviolet light, X-rays, and gamma radiation.

Milky Way

>

The Milky Way is the galaxy that contains our solar system. Its name is derived from the appearance of the galaxy from Earth: a band of light seen in the night sky formed from stars that cannot be individually distinguished by the naked eye. More than one-third of Earth's population cannot see the Milky Way from their homes due to light pollution.



nimbostratus clouds

Rain clouds that are a dark grey and often blot out the sun.

red dwarf

A small and relatively cool star with low luminosity. Although they make up about three-quarters of the Milky Way, not one can be observed by the naked eye from Earth.

singularity

A gravitational singularity is a location in space-time where the gravitational field of a celestial body becomes infinite. A star collapsing beyond a certain point would form a black hole, inside which a singularity would be formed.

LESSON PLAN

OBJECTIVE Students will create an explanatory script or scene based on the epilogue of IRT's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

STANDARDS

9-12.W.3.2: Write informative compositions on a variety of topics that establish and maintain a style appropriate to the purpose and audience.

9-12.W.3.3: Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms that engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters.

INTRODUCE Invite students to recall the epilogue of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* at IRT. Make a list of what students remember. Examples might be the type of lighting or sound used, projections, where Christopher stood on stage, or the problem he solved. For reference, the epilogue as scripted is excerpted on the next page. Extend students' thinking and ensure recall of the scene with some of the following questions:

- Did Christopher's explanation help you understand the problem he was solving?
- What production elements helped you understand Christopher's thinking? Did any not help?
- Did Christopher's explanation make the problem more interesting to you?
- Did you find the epilogue informative? Entertaining? Distracting?
- What did you learn about Christopher through the epilogue?

EXPLAIN In the epilogue to *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, the playwright is giving us a chance to engage with Christopher that we were previously not allowed to. We see Christopher on his own terms, in his own element, discussing the things that matter most to him without being discouraged by adults. By breaking the fourth wall and leveraging production elements, we can see Christopher not just overcome an obstacle, but excel.

CREATE In this extension activity, students will create a scene designed to let them show how they excel using the following writing prompt:

Using the Maths Appendix from The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time as a model, write a script or scene in which you inform or teach the audience about a topic or skill you excel at or are passionate about.

- Encourage students to think of even the most mundane things. Can they build something in Minecraft? Play basketball defense? Make a PB&J? Crochet? Can they name every Best Picture winner or Baskin Robbins flavor?
- How can students use theatre production elements to make what they share more interesting? No effect is too crazy – be imaginative and push the limits of what could happen in a theatre!

EXTEND To extend the fun, have students create a film script from their writing (a template for film scripts can be found here) and film their scene using a cell phone camera. Bonus points for finding a way to create any special effects!

Excerpt from *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* for use with lesson on previous page.

MATHS APPENDIX

After the applause, lights down, smoke, Christopher appears rising through the centre trap. There is very cool, electro music.

CHRISTOPHER. Thank you very much for clapping and thank you very much for staying behind to listen to how I answered the question on my maths A-level. Siobhan said it wouldn't be very interesting but I said it was. She didn't tell me what I should use, so I decided to use all the machines and computers in the theatre including: VL3500 Arc lights, which are moving lights; Light Emitting Diodes; Meyer MSL 2 speakers; a DPA boom mic and Sennheiser radio transmitter; and 4 PTD20KS Panasonic overhead projectors.

I had 2 hours to answer 19 questions — but I spent 38 minutes doing moaning and groaning which meant I only had 4 minutes to answer this question.

A timer is projected — displaying 4.00.00.

“Show that a triangle with sides that can be written in the form $n^2 + 1$, $n^2 - 1$, and $2n$ (where n is bigger than 1) is right-angled.” And this is what I wrote.

Christopher runs and starts the timer.

Start the clock.

A right-angled triangle is made using projection (or lasers if you have the money or holograms if you are in the future).

If a triangle is right-angled, one of its angles will be 90 degrees and will therefore follow Pythagoras' theorem. Pythagoras said that $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$

To put it simply, if you draw squares outside the 3 sides of a right-angled triangle, then add up the area of the 2 smaller squares, this will be equal to the area of the larger square. This is only true if the triangle is right-angled. Come on Bluey! The A-level question is an algebraic formula for making right-angled triangles.

$n^2 + 1$ is the biggest number in this equation, which makes it the hypotenuse, which is the longest side of the triangle. To find the area of a square you must multiply the length by the width. So ... the area of this square is $2n \times 2n$ Which equals $4n^2$. The area of this square is $(n^2 - 1) \times (n^2 - 1)$ Which equals $n^4 - 2n^2 + 1$

Now, if we add these two squares together ... This equals $n^4 + 2n^2 + 1$ NOW ... We need to find the area of the square on the hypotenuse which is $(n^2 + 1) \times (n^2 + 1)$ Which equals $n^4 + 2n^2 + 1$ Which is THE SAME TERM!!!!

So the area of the two small squares adds up to the area of the larger square. So all my squares fit together to satisfy Pythagoras' theorem. So the triangle is — RIGHT-ANGLED!

And that is how I got an A-star.

Confetti.

Christopher exits.

ALIGNMENT GUIDE

Seeing a performance at Indiana Repertory Theatre is a great way to help make connections for students and facilitate their understanding of a text. Some key literature standards to consider on your trip would be:

Reading – Literature

- RL.1 – Read and comprehend a variety of literature independently and proficiently
- RL.2 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by analyzing, inferring, and drawing conclusions about literary elements, themes, and central ideas
 - Sample: 9-10.RL.2.2: *Analyze in detail the development of two or more themes or central ideas over the course of a work of literature, including how they emerge and are shaped and refined by specific details.*
- RL.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature, using knowledge of literary structure and point of view
 - Sample: 11-12.RL.3.2: *Analyze a work of literature in which the reader must distinguish between what is directly stated and what is intended (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement) in order to understand the point of view.*
- RL.4 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature by connecting various literary works and analyzing how medium and interpretation impact meaning

Reading – Nonfiction

- RN.2 – Extract and construct meaning from nonfiction texts using a range of comprehension skills
 - Sample: 8.RN.2.3: *Analyze how a text makes connections and distinctions among individuals, events, and ideas.*

Reading – Vocabulary

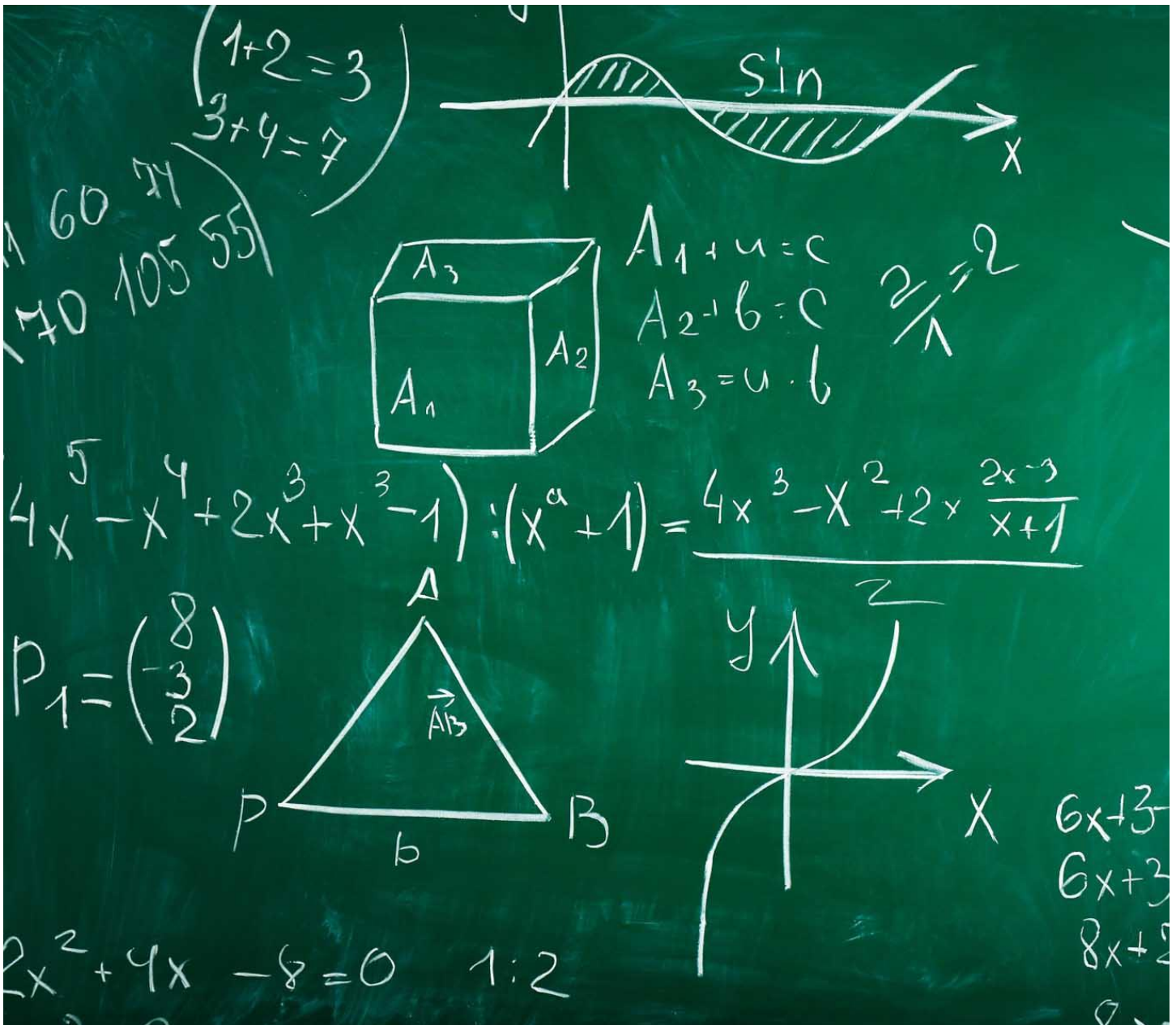
- RV.3 – Build comprehension and appreciation of literature and nonfiction texts by determining or clarifying figurative, connotative, and technical meanings
 - Sample: 9-10.RV.3.3: *Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.*



PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Neither author Mark Haddon nor playwright Simon Stephens ever use the word autism in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. In fact, no explanation is ever given for Christopher's unusual behaviors. Yet the autism community has embraced both the novel and the play as among the best literary representations of what it is like to be autistic. How much do your students know about autism? There are excellent resources listed in this study guide on pages 20 and 21. How do we learn to differentiate between what we think the disability community needs, and what they actually want? How can we learn to treat people of all kinds of difference with respect and understanding?

If your students have read the book, discuss how they imagine it might be adapted for the stage. What would be the particular challenges of presenting this story on stage? In what ways might the stage be a better vehicle for telling this story than film or television?



POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What challenges does *The Curious Incident* present to the ways we usually think and talk about characters in plays? How does it force us to reexamine our normal ideas about love and desire, which are often the driving forces in drama? By seeing the world through Christopher's eyes, what do we discover about ourselves?

Christopher says he doesn't understand lies, and that he cannot lie. Does the play bear that idea out? Why is lying such an alien concept to him? Why do "normal" human beings in the play, such as Christopher's parents, and most of us, find lies so indispensable? Why is the idea of truth so central to Christopher's narration?

How does the play help us understand, at least in part, someone we might otherwise never understand?

The title of the book (and the play) comes from Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes story "Silver Blaze," about the theft of a racehorse. When Holmes mentions "the curious incident of the dog in the night-time," the police inspector says, "The dog did nothing." Holmes points out that the failure of the watch dog to bark shows that the dog knew the thief, thus narrowing the field of suspects. Why do you suppose author Mark Haddon chose this quote as his title?

Christopher's parents, with their affairs, their arguments, and their passionate rages, are clearly in the grip of emotions they themselves can't fully understand or control. How does this state relate to Christopher's incomprehension of the passions that drive other people?

After the play ends, what do you think will happen in Christopher's relationship with his father? What do you think the future holds for Christopher? Will he reach his goals? Why or why not?

More and more, projections are becoming an integral part of scenic design in the theatre. How effective was this production element in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*? How did it enhance or detract from your experience of the play? In general, how do you feel about the use of video elements in stage productions?

This production features a generous amount of non-realistic movement by the actors. How did this element enhance or detract from your experience of the play? How did it enhance or detract from the storytelling?



WRITING PROMPTS

In the play, Christopher finds a box of letters that his mother has written to him. Only a few are read on stage or included in the original novel. Write your own version of a letter to Christopher from his mother. It might be the first letter she wrote to him after she left, or a letter about an important day in her life, or about an ordinary day. Include in the letter a memory she has about Christopher, or something she has experienced that reminds her of him, or something she would like to do with him.

We learn about characters from what they say, what they do, and from what other characters say about them. Choose one of the play's characters and do a character analysis beginning with those three points. Then extrapolate more biographical information, such as age, education, passions, aspirations, likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams, work life, relationships, socioeconomic position, etc. Write an interview in the guise of an actor, asking questions of your chosen character, not only about the events of the play, but also about aspects of his or her life that are not seen in the play.

Write a review of the play. A well-rounded review includes your opinion of the theatrical aspects—scenery, lights, costumes, sound, direction, acting—as well as your impressions of the script and the impact of the story and/or themes and the overall production. What moments made an impression? How do the elements of scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound work with the actors' performance of the text to tell the story? What ideas or themes did the play make you think about? How did it make you feel? Did you notice the reactions of the audience as a whole? Would you recommend this play to others? Why or why not? To share your reviews with others, send to: education.irt@gmail.com

ACTIVITIES

In the play, Christopher travels from his home in Swindon to Willesden, London, a distance of about 80 miles. Using maps from the library or the internet, map out his journey. Try to find all the locations mentioned in the play, including Swindon, Didcot Parkway, Warwick Avenue, Maida Vale, Kilburn Park, Queen's Park, Kensal Green, Willesden Junction, and London. Choose a location you have never visited that is around 80 miles from where you live, say from Indianapolis to Portland, or from Bloomington to Madison. Without using a GPS or other route-planning devices on your phone or computer, how would you find your way there with maps or timetables only? If you could not drive, what would your public transportation options be? How long would it take you to get there? How much would it cost? What towns would you pass through along the way?

Christopher wants to be an astronaut, at least in part, because he thinks it is a career for which he is well suited. What careers are suggested by your students' interests and aptitudes? Have them take one of the many free online career aptitude tests, such as these:

<http://info.ipfw.edu/blog/3-advisor-recommended-career-aptitude-assessments>

<http://www.mi-career.com/>

<https://www.petersons.com/college-search/career-assessment-sophomore.aspx#/sweeps-modal>

<https://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3503>

It might be interesting to take more than one of these tests and compare the results.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

AUTISM

The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism

by Naoki Higashida, translated by
K A Yoshida & David Mitchell

*Ten Things Every Child with Autism Wishes
You Knew* by Ellen Notbohm

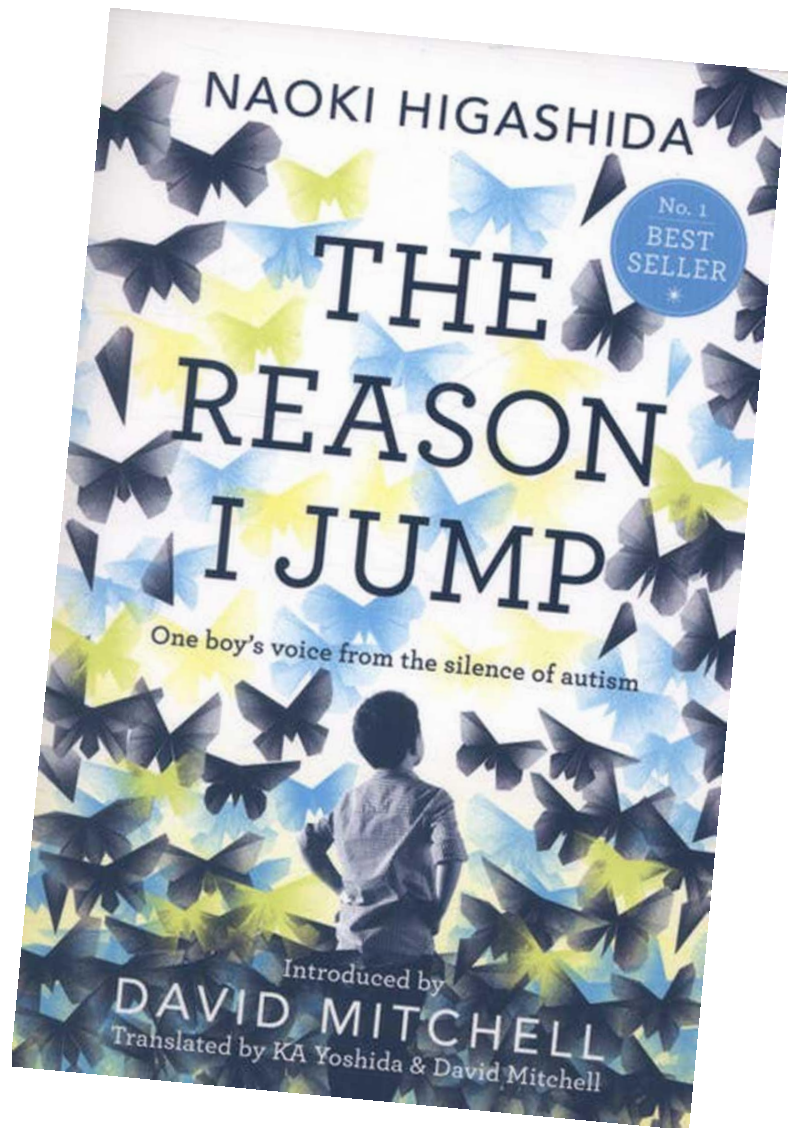
*Uniquely Human: A Different Way
of Seeing Autism* by Barry M. Prizant

*Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism
and the Future of Neurodiversity*
by Steve Silberman

In a Different Key: The Story of Autism
by John Donovan & Caren Zucker

Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's
by John Elder Robison

Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism
by Temple Grandin



FAMILIES

Now What Do I Do?: A Guide to Help Teenagers with Their Parents' Separation or Divorce
by Lynne Cassella-Kapusinski

Divorce Helpbook for Teens by Cynthia MacGregor

CAREERS IN MATH & SCIENCE

101 Careers in Mathematics by Andrew Sterrett Jr.

She Does Math!: Real-Life Problems from Women on the Job by Marla Parker

The Book of Potentially Catastrophic Science: 50 Experiments for Daring Young Scientists
by Sean Connolly

Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World by Rachel Ignotofsky

WEBSITES

Risa Brainin, the director of the IRT's production of The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, particularly recommends the following:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAoYMFsyj_k1ApNj_QUkNgKC1R5F9bVHs

Amethyst Schaber's YouTube playlist of 21 videos she has made answering FAQs about autism. Risa has found episodes 1, 2, 9, 10, 6, 12, 13, 15, and 21 especially useful.

<http://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/how-austistic-activist-lydia-x-z-brown-fighting-violence-affecting-n626266>

an excellent article by autistic activist and law student Lydia X. Z. Brown

AUTISM

<http://neurowonderful.tumblr.com/>

Amethyst's Schaber's blog about autism, disability, and living life on the spectrum.

www.autismspeaks.org

one of the leading autism science and advocacy organizations

www.autismhwy.com

started by a woman whose son has autism; easy to navigate, informative, and fun

FAMILIES

<http://divorceandteens.weebly.com/>

addressing all steps of the process, before, during, and after

<http://www.familieschange.ca/>

has a section for teens in particular

CAREERS IN MATH & SCIENCE

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/10/10-creative-careers-that-use-science-and-math/382160/>

"Ten Creative Careers that Rely on Science and Math"—from *The Atlantic*

<http://www.sciencepioneers.org/students/stem-websites>

a collection of links to STEM career websites for students

GLOSSARY

A-Level Examination

Advanced Level Examination in the British school system, generally required for admission to a university. Similar to American AP Exams, they can test many different subjects. Students generally prepare for them for two years

A-star (A*)

When taking the A-Levels, one can earn a grade of A*, A, B, C, D, or E. A* is given to students that achieve an average of 80% across all modules.

Bloody Nora

An exclamation of disgust or surprise, probably derived from the Cockney “flamin’ horror.”

First Class Honours Degree

A bachelor’s degree in which the recipient is in the 70th or higher percentile in his or her class. (Words that end in *or* in the United States, such as *honor*, are often spelled with *our* in Britain.)

Further Maths

The name given to any mathematics course studied beyond AS-Level and A-Level courses, including advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus.

jumper

The British term for a sweater.

London A-Z ... A to Zed

A central London atlas that includes detailed maps with an index of more than 69,000 streets, car parks, and railway and Underground connections.

Messerschmitt

A German World War II fighter plane.

quid

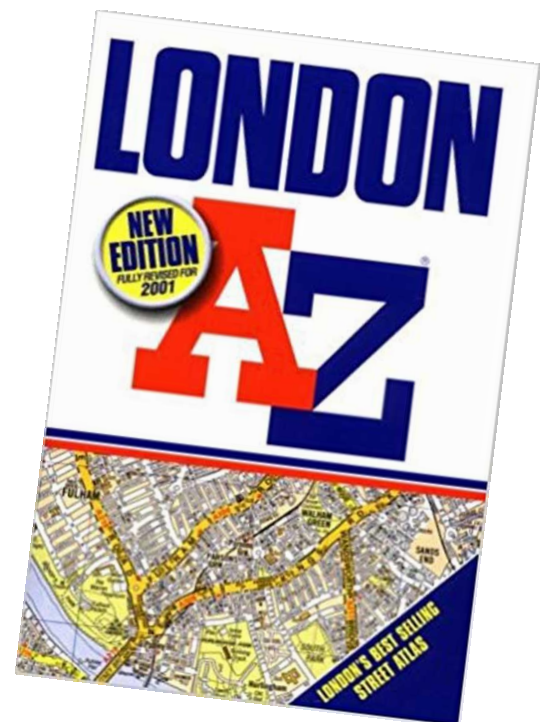
Quid is slang for a pound, the basic unit of British currency, comprised of 20 shillings.

red mist

“When the red mist comes down” is a common British expression for getting angry. It is derived from the old belief that blood goes to the head when one is angry or excited.

Tube

Nickname of the London Underground, or subway.



THE ROLE OF THE AUDIENCE

You, the audience are one of the most important parts of any performance. Experiencing the theatre is a group activity shared not only with the actors, but also with the people sitting around you. Your attention and participation help the actors perform better, and allow the rest of the audience to enjoy the show. Here are a few simple tips to help make each theatre experience enjoyable for everyone:

Leave mp3 players, cameras, mobile phones, and other distracting and noise-making electronic devices at home.

You may think texting is private, but the light and the motion are very annoying to those around you and on stage. Do not text during the performance.

Food and drink must stay in the lobby.

The house lights dimming and going out signal the audience to get quiet and settle in your seats: the play is about to begin.

Don't talk with your neighbors during the play. It distracts people around you and the actors on stage. Even if you think they can't hear you, they can.

Never throw anything onto the stage. People could be injured.

Remain in your seat during the play. Use the restroom before or after the show.

Focus all your attention on the play to best enjoy the experience. Listen closely to the dialogue and sound effects, and look at the scenery, lights, and costumes. These elements all help to tell the story.

Get involved in the story. Laugh, cry, sigh, gasp—whatever the story draws from you. The more emotionally involved you are, the more you will enjoy the play.

Remain at your seat and applaud during the curtain call because this is part of the performance too. It gives you a chance to recognize a job well done and the actors a moment to thank you for your attention.

